

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**LESSON RELEARNED:
THE URGENT NEED TO REPLACE
POST-CONFLICT IMPROVISATION WITH POLICY**

by

Colonel Jeffrey B. Clark
United States Army
Medical Corps

William Flavin
Project Adviser

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Report Documentation Page			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 18 MAR 2005		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED -	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Lesson Relearned The Urgent Need to Replace Post-Conflict Improvisation With Policy				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Jeffrey Clark				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT See attached.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 31	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Colonel Jeffrey B. Clark
TITLE: Lesson Relearned: The Urgent Need to Replace Post-Conflict Improvisation with Policy
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project
DATE: 18 March 2005 PAGES: 31 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

By revoking President Clinton's Presidential Decision Directive 56, *Managing Complex Contingency Operations*, and failing to replace it with his own national security presidential directive for post-conflict operations, President Bush dismissed the hard-earned insights of the Clinton Administration. The Bush Administration lacked the policy, mechanisms and organization for clearly defining the desired end state, synchronizing all elements of power toward that common goal, and developing an interagency political-military plan to achieve political purpose in Afghanistan and Iraq. Improvisation, rather than as Clausewitz warned "first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it," resulted in dysfunctional interagency efforts and ad hoc post-conflict organizations and leadership. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the urgent need for the executive and legislative branches of the United States government to institutionalize policy, authority, infrastructure and doctrine to harmonize the properly resourced instruments of power for post-conflict operations. The United States must not continue to relearn the same post-conflict lessons with each administration. A review of the evolution of the Clinton Presidency's complex contingency policy, the development of relevant US joint military doctrine and the Bush Administration's failure to heed the nation-building lessons of the previous administration provide context for this argument.

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PREFACE

What prompts this outburst? It was a picture on Thursday's front page of this paper of a US soldier being hugged by his young kids as he left for Iraq, just before Christmas. That picture left a real lump in my throat. It prompted me to ask myself whether, given everything I knew, I could tell that soldier's kids that their government was doing everything it could to make sure their dad comes home both safe and successful. I could not tell his kids that right now—and that really bothers me.

- Thomas Friedman
New York Times, 14 December 2003

**LESSON RELEARNED:
THE URGENT NEED TO REPLACE POST-CONFLICT IMPROVISATION WITH POLICY**

No one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it. The former is its political purpose; the latter its operational objective.¹

- Carl von Clausewitz, On War, 1832

By these recent successes the re-inauguration of the national authority--reconstruction--which has had a large share of thought from the first, is pressed much more closely upon our attention. It is fraught with great difficulty. . . We simply must begin with, and mould from, disorganized and discordant elements. Nor is it a small additional embarrassment that we, the loyal people, differ among ourselves as to the mode, manner, and means of reconstruction.²

- President Lincoln's Last Public Address,
Speech on Reconstruction, April 11, 1865

We now have a formalized relationship that establishes that critical link between policy and power in Presidential Decision Directive 56. PDD 56 contains the President's [Clinton] guidance on "Managing Complex Contingency Operations." It establishes a framework that helps us orchestrate all the instruments of power toward a common goal . . . In other words, I will tell you today that PDD 56 is a major step forward because it, in fact, forces all of us—the politician, the diplomat, and the soldier—to ask the tough questions right up front, and not ex post facto.³

- General Henry H. Shelton,
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, January 19, 2000

Two years following his election and one year following September 11, 2001, The Bush Doctrine, as outlined in The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, specified that the United States will identify and eliminate terrorists and *the regimes that sustain them*, "not hesitating to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists . . ."⁴ The elimination of a regime is a surrogate end point, which the US led coalition achieved in splendid fashion both in Afghanistan and Iraq. But replacing that regime with a democracy/market economy, regional stability or whatever end state is determined to be in the US national interest, requires policy to synchronize all elements of national power to achieve the political purpose. Unfortunately, the Bush Administration did not heed the admonitions of the consummate realist, Carl von Clausewitz, the agonizing of the first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, or the hard-earned insights of the Clinton

Administration and pursued US National Security Strategy without “a process that requires an interagency plan for termination and the post-conflict period.”⁵

National level strategy, planning and coordination should set the conditions for success for all phases of a combat operation. “The National Command Authorities should clearly describe the desired end state before committing the armed forces of the United States.”⁶ The desired end state should be overarching and “the thread of continuity that ties the strategic objectives to the operational and tactical levels.”⁷ Since “national objectives can often be accomplished only after the fighting has ceased”⁸ strategy, planning and coordination for Phase IV or post-conflict operations is critical to achieving political purpose.

The effective conduct of civil military operations (CMO) in the aftermath of conflict, whether as liberation, occupation, something in between, or something else entirely, depends on the existence of strategy at both the national and theater levels. If there is any lesson common to all our recent experiences, it is that the lack of a full blown strategy raises grave doubts about the long-term success of the enterprise.⁹

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the urgent need for the executive and legislative branches of the US government to institutionalize policy and interagency procedures that will synchronize all elements of power to achieve the desired end state “before committing the Armed Forces of the United States.”¹⁰ A review of the evolution of the Clinton Administration’s complex contingency policy, the development of relevant joint doctrine over the past decade, and the Bush Administration’s failure to apply the “lessons common to all our recent experiences” in the aftermath of conflict in Operation Iraqi Freedom will provide the context for this argument.

CONTEXT

If commanders are to carry out their missions, they must know how their operations affect the agreed strategic plan for the emergency in order to avoid falling victim to . . . the law of unintended consequences. The greater the degree of disarray, even dissolution, within a social order, the more unpredictable the outcome of the intervention. That does not mean we don’t intervene; it does mean we must think carefully about what we will do, how we can do it, and with whom we must coordinate our activities.¹¹

During the Cold War US foreign policy emphasized deterrence and containment of communism. US military power was generally used to maintain the status quo, not to alter it and to manage crises, not to resolve underlying problems.¹² With the break up of the Soviet Union, the United States and the rest of the international community intervened to halt humanitarian catastrophes and attempt to install peace at their discretion.¹³ Of the 55 UN

peace operations since 1945, 41 began after 1989.¹⁴ Beginning in 1990, “the United States had the option of using its unrivaled power to resolve, rather than to simply manage or contain, international problems of strategic significance.”¹⁵

In the 1990s, President Clinton’s cooperative security strategy set the United States on a course favoring multilateral military interventions to resolve civil conflicts and humanitarian crises with each successive operation more ambitious than its predecessor. Somalia started as a humanitarian operation but evolved to an attempt to establish democracy.¹⁶ However, the United States entered this peace operation without a coherent strategy designed to achieve an enduring and defined political purpose and quickly abandoned Somalia when the cost of seventeen US Rangers’ lives immediately exceeded the value of whatever political objective rescuing that failed state may have offered.¹⁷

Following the debacle in Somalia, the Clinton Administration produced an interagency political-military plan before it intervened in Haiti to restore a democratically elected president. Since deposing the regime would be easy but reconstructing the country would be challenging, it planned in some detail the roles and responsibilities the multiple government agencies would perform during the post-conflict phase. Lessons from Haiti would later be codified in Clinton’s Presidential Decision Directive 56.¹⁸ The US resisted intervening in the Balkans before finally assisting its European allies to force a settlement and initiate nation building in Bosnia and Kosovo.¹⁹ But, many of the lessons learned in Haiti were not applied in the Balkans. Still, President Clinton’s improvised use of the military was not being focused through the prism of political purpose and national strategy. To its credit, the Clinton administration directed an interagency review of peacekeeping programs and procedures to establish a comprehensive policy framework to address the realities of post-Cold War peace operations.²⁰

In May of 1994, the Clinton Administration produced the first of two Presidential Decision Directives (PDD) which would begin to replace impulse with policy. PDD 25, *US Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations*, established a comprehensive framework of criteria which should be met for the United States to become involved in peace operations. “Peace operations should not be open-ended commitments but instead linked to concrete political solutions; otherwise they should normally not be undertaken.”²¹ PDD 25 also “focused attention on the need for improved dialogue and decision-making among governmental agencies.”²²

While PDD 25 provided rudimentary policy on integrating the elements of power in peace operations, joint doctrine on this competency was limited and scattered across several joint publications. In response to this lack of guidance, Joint Pub 3-08, *Inter-agency Coordination During Joint Operations*, 9 October 1996 recognized that “the security challenges facing the

nation today are increasingly complex, requiring the skills and resources of many organizations.²³ It discusses interagency processes, players and coordination, the evolving role of the Armed Forces, functions of the National Security Council, and outlines the principles for organizing interagency efforts at the operational level but not the strategic level.²⁴

Publication of JP 3-08 was a welcomed addition but the Department of Defense and other governmental agencies needed definitive national policy guidance to achieve unity of effort. The Clinton Administration lacked a process at the National Security Council level to integrate and coordinate strategy and interagency planning efforts in complex contingency and post-conflict operations. Presidential Decision Directive 56, dated May 1997, would provide a policy designed to clearly define the political purpose and to focus the nation's elements of power into a unified effort.

The intent of PDD 56, *Policy on Managing Complex Contingency Operations*, was to “institutionalize interagency coordination mechanisms and planning tools to achieve US government unity of effort in complex contingency operations and in post-conflict reconstruction.”²⁵ “It is a superb example of codifying lessons of ‘purposeful adaptation’ after fitful efforts by American civilian and military in the aftermath of problematic interventions . . .”²⁶

PDD 56 directed that the National Security Council's Deputies Committee would lead the interagency process for handling such operations. The Deputies Committee consisted of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the Vice Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff, Assistant Secretary of State for Political Affairs, and the Deputy National Security Adviser, with other departments represented as needed. When a crisis arose, that body was responsible for synchronizing the various governmental agencies into a unified effort.²⁷ “Normally, the Deputies Committee will form an Executive Committee (ExComm) . . . a POL-MIL plan will be developed as an integrated planning tool for coordinating USG [US government] actions in a complex contingency.”²⁸

The POL-MIL plan would consist of eleven specified components including Situational Assessment, US Interests, Mission Statement, Objectives, Transition/Exit Strategy, and Desired Pol-Mil End State. A major feature of PDD 56 was that the POL-MIL plan would be rehearsed by the Deputies Committee so each agency could explain their role and address issues prior to the commitment of resources. It also required that interagency after-action reviews be conducted to capture lessons learned and insights applicable to future contingency operations. In addition, PDD 56 mandated training for NSC staff and deputy assistant secretary level personnel of both the Department of Defense and Department of State to familiarize them with

the development and implementation of the POL-MIL plan and to improve interagency coordination and cohesion.²⁹

The Interagency Handbook for Managing Complex Contingency Operations was developed to institutionalize the mechanisms and procedures mandated by PDD 56. The handbook was intended to serve as doctrine for those US government agencies charged with developing and implementing an interagency POL-MIL plan. "The Handbook provides a guide for those in the interagency that are or will be involved in planning for such operations . . . The intent is to ensure that improved coordinating mechanisms and planning tools become standard, routine, and useful within the interagency community when senior policy-makers decide to undertake an operation."³⁰

PDDs 25 and 56 and the insights which led to these two presidential decision directives, in turn, significantly influenced joint doctrine. Joint Publication 3-57, *Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Operations*, 8 February 2001 includes numerous references to PDD 56 and the presidential directive is included in the document as Appendix B. JP 3-57 emphasizes the importance of the NSC-level POL-MIL plan in establishing the desired end state "that ties the strategic objectives to the operational and tactical levels."³¹

During complex contingency operations, the interagency community must develop and promulgate a political-military (POL-MIL) plan in compliance with Presidential Decision Directive-56 (PDD-56), *Managing Complex Contingency Operations*, which designates a lead agency for the mission and ensures coordination among the various agencies of the USG.³²

Presidential Decision Directives 25 and 56, applied in tandem, were sound policy which provided a pragmatic framework, led by the NSC and founded upon interagency coordination within the executive branch, for determining whether and how the US should intervene. When faced with a complex contingency, PDD 25 would guide policymakers' deliberations in determining the political objective and whether the US should intervene. If the decision was made to intervene, PDD 56 and its doctrinal handbook would then direct the interagency coordination of diplomatic, military, economic and other elements of power into a synchronized POL-MIL plan to achieve the desired political end state. Joint doctrine was appropriately and logically derived from these PDDs. The specified end state, interagency POL-MIL plan and NSC level unity of effort provided a framework for how the operation would be conducted. Clearly, as stated in JP 3-57, "the POL-MIL plan must be the base document of a combatant commander's plan."³³

The Clinton administration had learned via the school of hard knocks that “no one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it.”³⁴ Policy, structure and doctrine, not improvisation, was required to conduct complex contingency and post conflict operations in order to achieve Clausewitz’s “political purpose”.

Unfortunately, the critical insights gained during the Clinton Presidency were dismissed by the Bush Administration. Conservatives had disapproved of the Clinton Administration’s liberal conception of national interests and cooperative security strategy—“specifically that the White House had stretched the military too thin with peacekeeping missions in Haiti, Somalia and the Balkans.”³⁵ George W. Bush would capitalize on this sentiment during the 2000 presidential election. “I don’t think our troops ought to be used for what’s called nation-building. I think our troops ought to be used to fight and win war.”³⁶

President Bush’s first National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD-1) began by revoking the Clinton Administration’s PDDs and revamping the NSC interagency organization. Despite its “we don’t do nation-building” bias, it appears that the Bush Administration may have considered replacing PDD 56 with its own contingency planning policy (NSPD-XX).³⁷ As of this writing, however, no NSPD providing a system or framework for developing a NSC-level POL-MIL plan has been signed or promulgated.

Thus, on September 11, 2001, the Bush Administration lacked the mechanisms and organizations to synchronize the military, political, economic, and informational aspects of post conflict operations. There was no institutionalized process to “harmonize the interagency, combined, and civilian participants” and to “describe the desired end state in sufficient detail so that each of the agencies can develop its supporting plans.”³⁸ The Bush Administration’s dismissal of PDD 56 made critical aspects of US joint doctrine noted above irrelevant. There would be no NSC-level POL-MIL plan to serve as the US Central Command’s (CENTCOM’s) base plan for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

There was no interagency POL-MIL plan developed before OEF was initiated into Afghanistan. There was no defined end state, measures of effectiveness or interagency division of labor. There were no lines of authority among the various US government agencies involved and no balance between short term needs and long term objectives.³⁹ In summary, there was no post-conflict plan resulting in ad hoc stabilization and reconstruction.

The consequences of the Bush Administration’s failure to produce an interagency POL-MIL plan for post-conflict Iraq, and to do so first so as to be clear what it wanted to achieve and how it would achieve it, went beyond merely a lack of unity of effort. Not only did Department of

State and Department of Defense plan in isolation, their relationship devolved from interagency conflict to frank hostility.

The Department of Defense began considering options for forcibly removing Saddam Hussein in the spring of 2002.⁴⁰ At the same time the Department of State (DOS) initiated the Future of Iraq Project as part of its planning for post conflict reconstruction. The DOS assembled Iraqi professionals in exile along with State Department and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Middle East experts into 17 working groups and produced what would turn out to be a prescient report of potential issues for nation building in post-Saddam Iraq.⁴¹

Tensions quickly developed around the division of labor, policy, and authority for Iraq reconstruction within the Executive Branch, especially between DOD and DOS. "Bureaucratic warfare between the Department of State and DoD over team personnel and other issues were not reined in by the National Security Council."⁴² GEN (now retired) Tommy Franks, the CENTCOM commander for both OEF and OIF described the two departments' "deep and inflexible commitments to their own ideas [as] disruptive and divisive . . with respect to Iraq policy."⁴³

By late 2002, US forces had begun deploying to the Persian Gulf in anticipation of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). "The bitter rivalry and distrust that developed between the Pentagon, on the one hand, and the State Department and the intelligence community, on the other, led [DOD] to demand sole control over the reconstruction process."⁴⁴ The President granted DOD sole responsibility for nation building but it was not until January 20, 2003, just two months prior to the invasion, that LTG (RET) Jay Garner was selected to lead the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA). ORHA would be responsible for humanitarian assistance and reconstruction in Iraq⁴⁵ and report to CENTCOM.⁴⁶

LTG (RET) Garner started from scratch just eight weeks before the invasion to learn what DOS and others, to include the US Army War College,⁴⁷ had spent several months working on. For reasons that are not clear, other than the enmity between DOD and DOS, he was instructed by Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, to not waste his time reading the Future of Iraq Project report and was not allowed to bring in any Future of Iraq Project members, to include the project director whom Garner had personally selected for his team.⁴⁸

Garner lacked the people, resources and, importantly, the time to adequately prepare for the complexities of post conflict Iraq. "On February 21 [2003] he convened a two-day meeting of diplomats, soldiers, academics, and development experts, who gathered at the National Defense University to discuss postwar plans. 'The messiah could not have organized a sufficient relief and reconstruction effort or humanitarian effort in that short a time'."⁴⁹

ORHA was not placed under operational control (OPCON) of Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) until just before the war and “spent most of the early months of the occupation building itself rather than building Iraq.”⁵⁰ Per GEN (RET) Franks, in May 2003, two months after OIF began, ORHA was “understaffed, . . . badly underfunded, and their mission was not clear to everyone on the team.”⁵¹ “CENTCOM had many capabilities . . . but, we had neither the money nor a comprehensive set of policy decisions that would provide for every aspect of reconstruction, civic action, and governance.”⁵²

When it was perceived that reconstruction efforts were chaotic and disorganized, Garner was replaced by Ambassador L. Paul Bremer in May 2003 (just four months after Garner had been appointed and two months after reconstruction had begun).⁵³ The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) replaced ORHA with the nation-building mission “to restore conditions of security and stability, to create conditions in which the Iraqi people can freely determine their own future, and facilitate economy recovery, sustainable reconstruction and government”⁵⁴ until governance would be transferred officially to the Iraqis in June of 2004. Unlike Garner who reported to CENTCOM, Bremer would report directly to the Secretary of Defense, thus, creating separate chains of command for security and nation building—the antithesis of unity of effort.

“Presidential Envoy Bremer’s Coalition Provisional Authority and its predecessor ‘have been undermanned and operating with Team B from the beginning,’ with no standby capacity and bodies having to be scrounged from the State Department.”⁵⁵ A Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) field review dated July 17, 2003 concluded its report as follows:

The US government—both the executive branch and the Congress—must change certain business as usual practices in order to maximize the CPA’s opportunities to be successful. The CPA needs more resources, personnel, and flexibility. We owe it to our people in the field, and to Iraqis, to provide everything necessary to get this right. US credibility and national interest depend upon it.⁵⁶

In December 2003, the CPA’s lack of guidance was described by Thomas Friedman of the New York Times:

Everyone agrees that the goal is some kind of democratic Iraq, but I have yet to come away from any of the conversations with a clear sense of how we are going to get here to there, or even who exactly is the overall conductor of this diplomatic, financial and military symphony. I keep meeting with people, expecting to hear “The Plan” but I never quite hear it. . . . You can’t succeed in a place as difficult as Iraq without a workable plan to produce a broad-based government and without a unified team at home and abroad to execute it.⁵⁷

In March of 2004, Dr John Hamre, President and CEO of CSIS, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

The interagency disputes over postwar Iraq—and the failure of the NSC early on to ensure appropriate coordination of planning and operations—have had lasting impact on the effectiveness of the Coalition Provisional Authority's (CPA) efforts.

On May 11, 2004, just six weeks before the Iraqis assumed responsibility for governance of their country, President Bush signed a National Security Presidential Directive entitled *United States Government Operations in Iraq*. This NSPD transferred responsibility for nation-building from the Department of Defense to the State Department. The CPA turned over governance authority to the Iraqi Ministries and went home. Since June 30, 2004, the Chief of Mission, under the guidance of the Secretary of State, has been responsible for directing US policies in Iraq—minus security and military operations, to include organizing, equipping and training all Iraqi security forces, which has remained under the authority of CENTCOM.⁵⁸ Nation-building in Iraq may be summed as a succession of three improvised, short-notice transitions of authority.

Retired Major General William Nash summed the frustrations of post-conflict Iraq expressed by a innumerable think tanks, task forces, committees, study groups and commissions, both inside and outside the government: “Yeah, and the sadness of Iraq is that the soldiers are paying the price for the lack of coherent strategy at the national level and inadequate resources.”⁵⁹ The Bush Administration failed to “think carefully about what we will do, how we can do it, and with whom we must coordinate our activities”⁶⁰ for the aftermath of conflict in Iraq because there was no “process that requires an interagency plan for termination and the post-conflict period and has the discipline to make it work”⁶¹

There was no NSC level “proper institutional context for decision making . . . prior to the war to coordinate the enormously complex interagency effort required for reconstruction, although knowledge of how to do this had been painfully learned in earlier nation building efforts . . .⁶² Unfortunately, failure to learn these lessons resulted in a series of ad hoc, insufficient post-conflict nation-building organizations. Perhaps disdain for Clinton’s liberal humanitarian interventions was interpreted as none of his related policies, such as PDD 56, could be suited for the Bush neo-conservative strategy. Regardless, “the failures of post conflict planning and reconstruction for Iraq underlined the importance of PDD 56.”⁶³

RECOMMENDATIONS

Whether for reasons of human rights or national security, the United States has done a lot of intervening since the fall of the Berlin Wall, embarking upon a new nation-building

commitment, on average, every other year.⁶⁴ Each administration, regardless of how liberal or realist its national security strategy, must recognize that nation-building is “an inherent part of modern warfare. Our military forces can win the combat phase of wars decisively, but military operations themselves are rarely, if ever, sufficient to achieving the US’s overall strategic objectives. To decisively win the peace, we need an immediate and sharper focus on developing and institutionalizing the civilian and military capabilities the United States requires for complex operations.”⁶⁵

Dr John Hamre, President and CEO of the Center for Strategic Studies (CSIS), summarized the recommendation of many of the strategic think-tanks, including the Rand Corporation,⁶⁶ Council on Foreign Relations,⁶⁷ and the United States Institute for Peace,⁶⁸ in his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (FRC) Hearings when he recognized

. . . the need for more coordinated contingency planning, and for centralized oversight in the NSC, this and future administrations should ensure that appropriate guidance is in place to organize the cross-agency planning and operational efforts in complex contingencies. Such guidance was promulgated in 1997 as [PDD 56] but President Bush has not yet signed the draft National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD-XX) on complex contingencies that would have provided similar strategy and planning guidance for executive agencies responsible for efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq.⁶⁹

Replacing the current ad hoc US government process for addressing post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization operations must include five fundamental components. These recommendations are similar to those advocated by the organizations noted above and by the Stabilization and Reconstruction Civilian Management Act (SARCMA) of 2004, also called the Luger-Biden Bill⁷⁰ which was unanimously endorsed by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and is pending consideration by the full Senate: (1) Policy, (2) Authority, (3) Infrastructure, (4) Funding, (5) Doctrine. These recommendations are in essence a resumption of the evolution of lessons learned (and relearned) during the Clinton Presidency and dismissed along with PDD 56 by the Bush administration. Both the President of the United States (POTUS) and Congress have essential roles in fixing this critical deficiency in USG functioning since reformation will require both executive policy and funding, respectively.

(1) POLICY: Replace the current ad hoc US government process for addressing post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction operations with a standing comprehensive interagency policy.

The President should finalize, sign and fully implement the draft National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD-XX) on complex contingencies. NSPD-XX is founded on the pragmatic framework of PDD 56: determine the political purpose and clearly articulate the ends, ways and means in a POL-MIL plan *before* committing the armed forces of the United States. As stated in JP 3-57, “the POL-MIL plan must be the base document of a combatant commander’s plan.”¹⁷¹ As per former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Hugh Shelton: the politician, the diplomat, and the soldier must ask the tough complex contingency questions right up front, and not ex post facto.

Important aspects of PDD 56 which should be incorporated into NSPD-XX include the requirement for an interagency rehearsal before committing resources; after action reviews to capture lessons learned for future operations; and mandated training for NSC staff from the various agencies, especially DOD and DOS, to familiarize them with the POL-MIL planning process and even more importantly, to promote interagency coordination and cohesion.

(2) AUTHORITY: Some one with true decision-making power must be in charge.

Only the President of the United States (POTUS) has the authority to designate who will oversee interagency coordination at the NSC Principals level. POTUS should designate the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and specify that s/he has the authority to ensure the interagency POL-MIL plan is developed, rehearsed, and after action reviews conducted. The Assistant should have the authority to designate an accountable and empowered Special Representative to direct the execution of the POL-MIL plan. Since each will be responsible for national level interagency coordination and execution both the Assistant and Special Representative should be accountable to POTUS.

(3&4) INFRASTRUCTURE/FUNDING: The NSC and the State Department must have the capacity to coordinate and oversee post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction activities and the resources to get the job done efficiently and effectively. SARCMA if passed by Congress and its recommendations endorsed by POTUS would provide the needed infrastructure and funding.

SARCMA addresses the lack of a standing capability within the State Department to coordinate and oversee the civilian side of stabilization and reconstruction. President Bush’s decision to give the Department of Defense responsibility and authority for reconstruction in Iraq was at least in part due to “the reality that without a well-staffed and resourced office in the State Department, with appropriately high-level authority and access to principals in the Department, other agencies, and the White House, the President will not be able to rely on the State Department for post-conflict operations”¹⁷²

This bill will mandate an Office of International Stabilization and Reconstruction (OISR) within the State Department. OISR will serve as an institutional fund of knowledge and include the personnel and expertise to be able to effectively conduct nation-building. The bill would create a Readiness Response Corps of up to 250 federal personnel trained in nation-building and a Response Readiness Corps consisting of a roster of up to 500 skilled volunteers to be drawn from federal agencies and non-governmental organizations. SARCMA authorizes \$80 million dollars to staff OISR for the first two years and a \$100 million dollar contingency fund to enable the office to respond quickly to international crises upon the order of the President.⁷³ Former Secretary of State Colin Powell established OISR and designated a senior experienced diplomat, Ambassador Carlos Pasqual as Coordinator in September 2004.⁷⁴

Congress should pass SARCMA and apportion the funding to make OISR a reality. The DOD should wholeheartedly support OISR with experienced officers to ensure its success—
“Unless we improve the capacities of the entire US government (by institutionalizing and adequately resourcing functional entities specifically designed to undertake the various aspects of post-conflict reconstruction), then the overwhelming burden will continue to fall on the US military because the need won’t go away, and they will continue to be the only game in town.”⁷⁵

“SARCMA recognizes the need to formalize the NSC role in integrating and coordinating strategy and planning efforts . . . for post-conflict operations.”⁷⁶ The bill urges the President to establish a Directorate of Stabilization and Reconstruction within the NSC which would develop interagency contingency plans including synchronized civilian-military operations (POL-MIL plans) to address stabilization and reconstruction requirements; ie, be a permanent rather than the ad hoc ExComm called for in PDD 56. “The creation of a standing interagency committee, as suggested in the legislation, would also address the need for greater interagency coordination. This is a critical provision and essential if we are to make progress.”⁷⁷ SARCMA recommends that this committee be chaired by the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.⁷⁸

The President should immediately create both the NSC Directorate of Stabilization and Reconstruction and the standing interagency committee chaired by the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

(5) Doctrine: There must be NSC-level complex contingency doctrine to ensure the authority, coordinating mechanisms and procedures “become standard, routine, and useful within the interagency community when senior policy-makers decide to undertake an operation.”⁷⁹

The Interagency Handbook for Managing Complex Contingency Operations developed to institutionalize the coordination and procedures mandated by PDD 56 is an excellent reference for such doctrine. It should be modified to incorporate updates per SARCMA and POTUS directed NSC organizational changes as recommended above. Written and endorsed principles and procedures that guide actions and “are authoritative but require judgment in application”⁸⁰ are a hallmark of how the military achieves mission accomplishment. Doctrine will be critical for collaboration and focus in the development and execution of a POL-MIL plan involving disparate governmental agencies.

CONCLUSION

What prompts this outburst? It was a picture on Thursday's front page of this paper of a US soldier being hugged by his young kids as he left for Iraq, just before Christmas. That picture left a real lump in my throat. It prompted me to ask myself whether, given everything I knew, I could tell that soldier's kids that their government was doing everything it could to make sure their dad comes home both safe and successful. I could not tell his kids that right now—and that really bothers me.⁸¹

- Thomas Friedman
New York Times, 14 December 2003

The United States must not continue to relearn the same post-conflict lessons with each administration. The Bush Presidency in its preparation and execution of Operation Iraqi Freedom ignored the wisdom of Clausewitz and dismissed the lessons learned during the Clinton Administration. “If there is any lesson common to all our recent experiences, it is that the lack of a full blown strategy raises grave doubts about the long-term success of the enterprise.”⁸² Interagency policy, authority, infrastructure and doctrine must synchronize the properly resourced elements of power to achieve the desired end state. Improvisation rather than “first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it”⁸³ is unacceptable. Relearning this lesson by the current or future administrations is at best ignorance of how to properly employ the power of the United States to achieve political purpose and at worst a squandering of our nation's most precious resources.

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ENDNOTES

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¹⁴ Ibid., xiv

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Binnendijk, 5.

¹⁷ Dobbins, xv.

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²¹ Presidential Decision Directive 25, *US Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, May 1994); available from <<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd25.htm>>; Internet; accessed 21 October 2004.

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²³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations*, Joint Pub 3-08, Volume I, (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 9 October 1996), v.

²⁴ Ibid.

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²⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Operations*, Joint Pub 3-57, (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 8 February 2001), B-2.

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